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ABSTRACT

Although the number of Master's level counselor training programs has increased dramatically over the last 20 years, reduction in state and federal funding has reduced the demand for counselors. To examine the supply and demand for counselors in four San Francisco Bay area counties, a regional survey of degrees awarded between 1972 and 1981 in counseling, social work, and clinical psychology was conducted, as well as employment surveys of counseling positions in schools, colleges and universities (including community colleges), and government agencies (including mental health clinics and Veterans' Administration hospitals). The employment patterns of counseling graduates from the California State University at Hayward (CSUH) were examined also through a survey of 304 graduates from the classes of 1972, 1976, and 1980. The regional survey results indicated that supply, based on the total number of Master's degrees awarded in the Bay Area between 1972 and 1981 (8,326 total degrees, 4,350 of which were counseling degrees), far exceeded demand for employment. Approximately 260 positions were filled by counselors between 1972 and 1981 in the 4 Bay Area Counties. Roughly 160 positions went to community college counselors, and the remaining 98 were divided among school counselors, career counselors in university settings, and rehabilitation counselors in one county mental health department. Although not surveyed, private sector agencies potentially could have hired 2,760 counselors over the 10-year period. Employment prospects for the next 5 years are minimal. Results of the graduate employment follow-up (response rate of 34%) showed that neither year of graduation nor area of specialization had any significant impact on job history. The rate of employment in counseling was found to be lower for CSUH graduates than for counseling graduates in other parts of the country. (Author/BL)

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COUNSELOR SUPPLY, DEMAND, AND EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE.

A REGIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study reports on a survey of the supply and demand for counselors in four San Francisco Bay Area counties. It also interprets the results of an employment follow-up for a selected sample of counseling graduates from the California State University, Hayward.

Results of the survey indicate that supply, based on the total number of Master's degrees awarded during the past decade, far exceeded demand for employment in schools, universities and government agencies. Employment prospects for the next five years are minimal. Results of the follow-up show that neither year of graduation nor area of specialization had any significant impact on job history. The rate of employment in counseling was found to be lower for CSUH graduates than for counseling graduates in other parts of the country.

COUNSELOR SUPPLY, DEMAND, AND EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE.

A REGIONAL STUDY

Alexandra Gotsch, M.S.

The counseling profession has been expanding rapidly in the last 20 years. However, like other professions dedicated to public services, it is subject to the fluctuations of the economic and political system. With the serious cutbacks which currently affect school and social programs and the sustained growth of counselors education programs, the profession runs the risk of confronting a serious imbalance between supply and demand.

This paper is a report of a study assessing counselor supply and demand in four selected counties in the San Francisco Bay Area between 1972 and 1981. In addition, the study also interprets the results of an employment follow-up conducted among a sample of counseling graduates from the California State University, Hayward.

Background

The supply of Master's level training programs has increased dramatically in the last 20 years. In 1964, there were 327 institutions in the United States and its territories. In 1977, there were 519, a 35 percent increase in 13 years. (Hollis and Wantz, 1974, 1977).

In addition to accredited schools, number of non-traditional institutions; "universities without walls", "alternative schools", "external degrees" and "non-traditional studies" have begun to offer graduate degrees in guidance and various areas of counseling (Jones, 1976).

Coincidentally, substantial growth has also taken place among other helping professions, such a social work. In 1964 there were 59 graduate work programs in the United States and territories. In 1977, the number grew to

84, an increase of 42 percent in 13 years (Hardcastle and Katz, 1978).

The spectacular growth patterns in counseling and social work programs happened, in great part, in response to national recommendations for expansion and leglisative support which occured in the 1960's. For example, in 1958, the enactement of the National Defense Act (NDEA) Titles, V-A and V-B boosted the training of school counselors. The 1962 Manpower and Development Training Act and the Economic Opportunity act (Hitchcock, 1965) stimulated the growth for training career and vocational counselors. Training counselors to work in the field of mental health was also encouraged by the passage of the 1963 Community Mental Health Center Act (CMHA).

In California, expanding the training of mental health counselors appeared to be particularly justified following such important landmarks as the 1964 licensing of marriage, family and child counselors (MFCC) and the implementation of the Short-Doyle and Lanterman Petris-Short Acts in 1969.

Government programs and grants, however, do not necessarily mean permanent commitments. Each administration reallocates funding according to its own priorities. As of 1980, under the Reagan Administration, most social programs have been substantially reduced.

In California, the problem reached an acute phase following the enactment in July 1978 of the Jarvis-Gann Initiative (Proposition 13). Proposition 13 reduced local revenues by approximately seven billion dollars, of which schools and community colleges had, previously received "the lion's share" (Phair, 1980). The other victims of Proposition 13 were community mental health agencies and private agencies subcontracted by the county. Short-Doyle funding has been reduced as well. For example, in Santa Clara county funding for fiscal year 1982-83 was 19.3 million; in 83-84 it dropped to 17.9 million (Allocation Letter, California State Mental Health Bureau).

As a result of the financial squeeze, most potential employers of

counselors in California have been forced to freeze all present recruitment of personnel, consolidate available resources by requesting that presently employed staff perform additional duties and, in not unfrequent cases, lay off personnel (Skipitares, 1982).

Large scale layoffs among school counselors took place in 1981 and 1982 (Orlando, 1981; Wiswell, 1982, Bartsch, 1982; Grant 1982). Scarcity of employment in mental health agencies increased the competition among mental health workers trained in separate disciplines (Saum 1982)

The problem of over-supply of counselor educators and practioners has been recognized for nearly a decade. Bickford (1971) questioned the necessity of training more counselor educators in the face of a decreasing job market Jones (1974) showed that despite declining trends in demand for school counselors a significant number of counselor education programs, under financial pressures from their institutions, continued to increase enrollments in their programs.

This problem of imbalance has been aggravated by a long lag between changes in demand and supply response. Structural constraints make it hard for training institutions to deal with market fluctuations. In addition, sorting demand from supply has always presented considerable difficulties. On the demand side, accurate manpower forecasts are extremely difficult to make because potential employers are often reluctant or unable to supply data concerning the number of positions that will be needed in the future. On the supply side, surveying training institutions and compiling the numbers of graduates in given fields, would seem to be reasonably simple. Yet professional investigators such as Hollis and Wentz (1971, 1974, 1977) and Jones (1976), have found that institutions, like employers, are sometimes unable or reluctant to respond.

Another way to gauge the importance and future of a field is to go

directly to the people engaged in it and ask them how they assess their present situation and perceive their future in that field. This can be accomplished by conducting national surveys, whether by professional organizations or specialized institutions such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics. These undertakings are naturally very costly and time consuming. Moreover, they are not immune to error. Jones (1976) pointed to numerous and substantial errors made, in the past, by the National Education Association and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

On a more modest scale, schools may conduct follow-ups of their graduates. Follow-ups in mailed questionnaire form have several well-known limitations. For example, the development and validation of an information collecting instrument that is simple and sufficiently comprehensive is in itself difficult. Obtaining sufficient numbers of responses for statistically significant results has plaguered all researchers. However, despite the difficulties of gathering data through mail surveys and follow-ups, they continue to be used because other methods are far more costly to administer.

With the understanding that results from such studies are seldom conclusive, a decade micro-survey of counselors supply and demand was conducted in four counties located in the San Francisco Bay Area. The employment follow-up of a sample of counseling graduates is included to provide information about their professional experience ten, five and two years after graduation.

Methodology

Assessment of the supply side was derived from the compilation of Master's degrees awarded in counseling from all the institutions located in the counties of Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara. With the exception of San Francisco, these counties have been expanding rapidly in the last decade. Together they represent a population of nearly four million

or close to one sixth of the entire state of California (California Statistical Abstract, 1982).

Data were also collected for Master's degrees awarded in Social Work and Clinical Psychology. These two disciplines were included because holders of these degrees enter into competition with Master's in Counseling for jobs in mental health agencies, state licensure and school credentialing. Data for the academic years starting in 1972 and ending in 1981 were obtained directly from the concerned institutions and compiled by the author. (Gotsch, 1983)

Assessment of the demand side was derived from employment surveys in the fields of school and community college counseling, college and university counseling centers and career and planning development centers, county operated mental health clinics and the Veterans' Administrations medical centers. All institutions were asked how many counselors with Master's degrees had been employed in 1972 and how may were employed in 1982, how many had been hired during the decade, what was the rate of turnover, and what were the projections for employment in the next five years.

The main objective of the follow-up was to gain information about local employment in counseling as experienced by counseling graduates from the California State University, Hayward (CSUH) in the last decade. Questions regarding the year of graduation, area of specialization and gender were asked to determine if these factors had any bearing on job history.

Three hundred and four graduates from the classes of 1972, 1976 and 1980 were selected for the study. Graduates from each class included majors in four different areas of specialization: School and Community, Clinical, School Psychology, and Career Counseling.

The sex distribution of the total sample was 67.1 percent female and 32.9 percent male. This distribution, however, varied among classes with the

percentage of females increasing substantially over time.

Responses were obtained from 103 graduates or 34 percent of the original sample. The percentage of response by class was: 1972, 20.4 percent 1976. 35 percent and 1980, 49 percent. The sex distribution among respondents was 68 percent female and 32 percent male, which was approximately the same ratio as in the original sample. The response from each area of specialization was: 49.51 percent from school counseling, 29.13 percent clinical counseling, 12.63 school psychlogy and 8.74 from career counseling. The distribution of specializations in the original sample was unknown.

Results of Supply and Demand

Fourteen institutions (Table 1) located in the counties of Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara award Master's degree in counseling and ancillary disciplines which prepare students to qualify for identical state credentials or licensure in California. More specifically, graduates with Master's degrees in the human sciences such as social work and several specialization in psychology and counseling are eligible for the standard designated service credential with a specialization in public personnel services (PPS). Graduates with these degrees who have taken additional required classes and accumulated 3000 hours of supervised field work, can also qualify for the license of Marriage, Family and Child Counseling (MFCC). Holders of the PPS credential can work as school counselors or school psychologists. Licensed MFCC's can engage in private practice. (Not surprisingly, the stated goals and purposes of the programs of the various institutions granting degrees in these disciplines tend to overlap considerably.) The inclusion of these disciplines was also motivated by the fact that with the exception of public mental health agencies that specifically require MSW degrees, employers seeking Master's degrees holders to perform duties broadly defined as "counseling", seldom make distinctions between

types of degrees. Preference for a given degree, when expressed, usually reflects on the quality and reputation of the institution granting it. Typically, job candidates are expected to show some expertise in a specified area of counseling. In actual practice, in most agencies there is no clear distinction between the roles and duties of social workers, clinical counselors or Master's level psychologist and in hospital settings of psychiatric nurses as well.

Tables 2 and 3 show that between 1972 and 1981, a total of 8,326 Master's degrees have been granted in the four investigated counties (Information was received from 12 out of the 14 surveyed institutions). More than half of these degrees were granted in various areas of counseling. The other half consisted of 30% in applied psychology and 20% in social work. In other words, during this ten year span there were twice as many graduates with counseling degrees than graduates with psychology degrees and almost three times as many graduating counselors as social workers.

In order to determine what employment opportunities would have been available, in the last decade, to these 8,326 graduates and more specifically for the 4350 counseling graduates, had they sought initial jobs in their profession in the vicinity of their graduate schools, a survey was undertaken among the following institutions: Public Schools, Colleges, Universities, Veterans' Administration Hospitals and County operated Mental Health Centers.

Table 1

Surveyed Institutions by County

ALAMEDA	SAN FRANCISCO	SAN MATEO	SANTA CLARA
California State University Hayward	San Francisco State University	College of Notre Dame	San Jose State Univ.
University of California Berkeley	University of San Francisco	California Institute of Transpersonal Psych.	Stanford University
California School of Professional Psychology	California Institute of Integral Studies		University of Santa Clara
Saint George Training Center			Palo Alto School of Professional Psychology
			Psychological Studies Institute

Table 2

Total Number of Degrees Awarded by County
1972-1981

Alameda	2747
San Francisco	2923
San Mateo	4
Santa Clara	2652
Total	8326

Table 3

Total Degrees Awarded by Discipline

Counseling	4350
Psychology	2248
Social Work	1728
Total	8326

Public Schools

Most school districts provided current data only up to 1981. Layoffs were anticipated in the fall of 1982 in Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties. The latter supplied an update on layoffs in September, 1982. The number of counseling positions in all the surveyed public schools had decreased since 1972. A total of 224 positions had been eliminated through lay offs or attrition between 1972 and 1981 with the majority occuring after 1978 (Table 4). None of the school districts were able to provide exact numbers or estimates of counselors hired during the decade on the basis of replacement. However, superintendents estimated an average turnover ratio of 0.5 percent per year of the total number of employed counselors in each county. Thus a total of 47 hires on the basis of turnover were estimated on the basis of 0.5 percent of the 1972 total of positions by counties multiplied by 5 for for the years between 1972 and 1977 (Table 5). All superintendents reported that no hiring, on the basis of replacement, had occured after 1977.

Community Colleges

Employment patterns in community colleges were obtained from data compiled by Phair (1977) of the Career and Planning Placement Center of the University of California at Berkeley.

Between 1972 and 1977 at total of 484 new full-time counselors were hired for all the community colleges in California. It was estimated that approximately 30 percent of these positions (162 counselors) went to Colleges located in the investigated counties in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Colleges and Universities

College and University Career and Placement Centers (Table 6) and, in one instance, a Psychologogical Counseling Center reported a total of 39 counseling positions filled in the last 10 years.

Table 4

Lost School Counseling Jobs 72-82

	1972	1981	1982
Alameda	666	637	-29
San Francisco	185	157	-28
San Mateo	155	125	-30
Santa Clara	810	673	-137
Total	1816	1592	- 224

Table 5

Estimated School Hires 1972-77 on Basis of 0.5% Turnover

Alameda	17
San Francisco...	5
San Mateo	4
Santa Clara...	21
Total	47

Respondents' projections for employment for the next five years in college and university settings were very low. Though turn over was higher in Career Planning and Placement Centers than in other surveyed agencies, employers reported 100 applicants for every vacancy. Directors of Student psychological services reported favoring counselors with Ph.D's and California licensing.

County Community Mental Health

With the exception of Alameda county, all county mental departments reported that their counseling services were provided by social workers and psychiatric nurses. When hired, individuals with Masters of Science degrees in Counseling were considered for clerical or administrative positions. Licensed MFCC's could compete for positions normally held by MSW's but no employment opportunity was anticipated for the next five years. In Alameda county, eight counseling positions were reported to have gone to candidates with Master's in Counseling. However, all of them were also graduates from Alcohol Rehabilitation Centers and thus were hired as rehabilitation counselors.

Veterans'Administration

The Veterans' Administration Medical Centers reported that holders of Master's degrees in Counseling could only apply for para-professional positions such as psychiatric technicians which did not require a graduate degree. Among the presently employed psychiatric technicians in the surveyed V.A.'s none was known to have a Masters' degree. Clinical and psychiatric counseling at the Veterans' Administration was provided by MSW's and psychiatric nurses.

In short, approximately 260 were filled by counselors between 1972 and 1981 in the counties of Alamada, San Francisco San Mateo and Santa Clara. Roughly 162 of these positions went to community college counselors the

remaining 98 (Table 7) were divided between school counselors, career counselors in university settings and rehabilitation counselors in one county mental health department.

On the basis of the information gathered, one may conclude that, between 1972 and 1981, the supply of Master's level counselors substantially exceeded demand for employment in schools, community colleges, universities, county mental health centers and the Veterans' Administration centers in the surveyed counties.

Other employment opportunities did exist, however, in the private sector which was not surveyed. Judging by the directories of social agencies and services, there are close to 500 private agencies in the counties of Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara. A random check revealed that, typically, the staffing of these agencies vary between 3 to 15 full-time employed counselors who can be either MSW's, MFCC's or unlicensed Master's level counseling or clinical psychology graduates. Turnover in these agencies was reported to have been low in the last ten years, with the exception of drug/alcohol rehabilitation and juvenile residential centers where" burn out" is fairly common. Though private, most of these agencies are partly funded through either federal, state, county or city funds. Thus, like public agencies, they have been affected by budget cuts. Assuming, optimistically, that these agencies could have hired a new counselor every other year since 1972, the total number of available positions the last 10 years would have been 2500. In addition to the 260 positions compiled above, 2760 positions could have been available to 4350 counselors in competition with social workers and other eligible graduates from the helping professions. These estimates would also assume that these hypothetical positions would have been offered to recent graduates. In fact, agencies have tended to favor experienced staff and thus have hired from

each other rather than novices in the field. Moreover, conversations with directors of private agencies revealed that in the last two years, positions normally held by Master's level counselors had been sought by Ph D's in Clinical Psychology. This phenomenon was becoming increasingly common in the San Francisco Bay Area where doctoral graduates have found it very difficult to find work and have been willing to accept lower paying jobs.

Thus, even on the basis of the selected and incomplete data gathered above, one can reasonably conclude that, in the last decade, there has been an over supply of Master's degrees in Counseling in the counties of Alameda, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara.

Results of the Follow-up

The employment follow-up of Counseling graduates from California State University, Hayward resulted in the following findings:

1. Slightly over half of the respondents, 56.3 percent, reported being employed in counseling-related jobs. Half among them were employed in the area in which they had specialized in school. Only 57 percent of the employed were working full-time in permanent positions. The majority among them were working in educational institutions. For the most part, counselors attributed their jobs to previous work experience in the field, personal contacts or to the fact they were employed as counselors while attending school and had been kept by the same employers after graduation.

The rate of employement of CSUH graduates in counseling jobs was lower than had been reported in previous surveys conducted in other states. For instance, Fujinaka and Stone (1974) reported a 69.5 percent rate of employment in a national survey among school counselors and guidance personnel, 6 and 7 years after graduation.

Table 6

Total MS/MA counseling positions filled 72/82 *
in colleges and universities

Alameda County:	California State University, Hayward	
	Student Counseling Center	1
	Student Placement Services	1
	University of California, Berkeley	
	Student Counseling Center	0
	Career Plannning and Placement Center	8
San Francisco :	San Francisco State University	
	Psychological Services	0
	Advising Center	11
	University of San Francisco	
	Psychological Services	n.r.
	Student Career and Placement Center	0
San Mateo:	College of Notre Dame	
	Admissions	1
	Menlo College	0
Santa Clara:	Stanford University	
	Student Counseling Services	0
	HELP (Faculty/Staff counseling)	0
	Career Planning and Placement Center	3
	San Jose State University	
	Student Counseling Services	0
	Career Planning and Placement	6
	University of Santa Clara	
	Counseling Services	2
	Career Planning and Placement Center	n.r.
Total		43

*This total reflects the number of positions filled in the course of the last ten years and not the number of positions presently filled in each agency. For instance, USF had hired 10 counselors since 1972 for the 4 positions in Career and Placement. Counseling positions presently held by graduates with MSW's, M.Ed's MTA's psychology or psychiatric nursing were not tallied.

Table 7

Positions filled by Master's in Counseling 1972-82

	Schools 72/77	Universities	Mental Health	Total
Alameda	17	10	8	49
San Francisco	5	21	0	21
San Mateo	4	1	0	10
Santa Clara	21	11	0	53
Total	47	43	8	98

2. Neither the year of graduation nor the area of specialization had any significant impact on job history.

3. Males had a slight advantage over females in the rapidity with which they found counseling related jobs after and graduation and their ability to secure full-time employement. However they were no significant differences between male or female salaries. Mean yearly salary for 1980-81 was reported to be $14,353.

4. The majority of employed respondents rated their opportunities for professional advancement as fair to poor.

5. Only 15 percent of the respondents reported being licensed MFCC's and 10 percent were engaged in private practice.

On the outset of this study, it was hypothesized that the employment market in the Bay Area had been more favorable in the early seventies. It was also assumed that some specialities in counseling would be in greater demand than others. More specifically, counseling in the field of mental health. These assumptions were not substantiated by the results of the follow-up.

The following excerpts from a letter sent by one of the respondents to the follow-up, employed in a non-counseling position, aptly summarizes conclusions drawn from this survey.

> When I graduated in 1973, I mailed a cover letter and a resume to 95% of all community colleges in the state of California. From that mailing, I received two interviews (...)
> In addition, I contacted public and private agencies, such as Voc. Rehab, Children's Home Society and community based counseling centers. Most professionals in these agencies, at that time, had MSW's and felt that my training was inadequate or

inappropriate (....) My search for a counseling position was so thorough that I eventually compiled a lenghty booklet of community services and contact people.

My M.S. has helped in my present position, but an M.B.A. would have been a more appropriate degree.

In my estimation there are far more individuals graduating with degrees in counseling than the market place will ever be able to absorb (...) My suggestion to the Educational Psychology Department would be to reduce the number of students they graduate each year.

Conclusion

This study was undertaken to assess the relationship between supply and demand of counselors in the San Francisco Bay Area between 1972 and 1981. On the basis of the present findings, it was concluded that supply way exceeded demand. Employment forecasts for the next five years, in the surveyed institutions, were either very low or negative.

An employment follow-up among Master's level graduates in Counseling from CSUH, revealed that fewer graduates were employed in their specialities or in counseling related jobs than had been found in previous national surveys. Male graduates appeared to have a slight advantage over females in their ability to find initial jobs after graduation and in securing full-time employment. The employment trend for counselors in the San Francisco Bay Area was shown to have been the same throughout the decade. There was no evidence that any special area of counseling had been in larger demand than another.

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